

# IBU Buddhist Literary Studies Series: Studies on the Suttas of the Digha Nikaya

[Penang Campus 2000]

No.1 - Brahmajāla Sutta: A Bumper Harvest of Unsound and Inaccurate Philosophical Speculations.	2
Some observations about the Dhamma in Buddhism.	2
Concluding remarks from the Sutta.	9
No.2 - Sāmaññaphala Sutta: Fruits of Recluse ship in the Buddhist Order.	11
No.2 - Sāmaññaphala Sutta: Fruits of Recluse ship in the Buddhist Order. Contd.	16
No.2 - Sāmaññaphala Sutta. Contd. 3. Three-tiered culture: <i>Sīla-Samādhi-Paññā</i> .	20
No.2 - Sāmaññaphala Sutta. Contd. 4. Post- <i>Sīla</i> Pre-requisites for the Jhānas.	22
No.2 - Sāmaññaphala Sutta. Contd. 5. Jhānas as Indian Spiritual Exercises and their nearness or otherwise to Buddhist Nirvanic Release.	24
No.3 - Ambaṭṭha Sutta. The story of an arrogant young Brahmin scholar and the confrontation with the Sakyans who are allegedly rude to him.	26
No. 3 - Ambaṭṭha Sutta. Contd.	28
No.3 B - Ambaṭṭha Sutta. Concluded.	30
No.4 A Sonadaṇḍa Sutta. [D.N.I. 111-126 / Dialogues of the Buddha I. 137-159]	32
No. 4 B. Sonadaṇḍa Sutta. [D.N.I. 111-126 / Dialogues of the Buddha I. 137-159]. Contd.	34
No.4 C. Sonadaṇḍa Sutta. [D.N.I. 111-126 / Dialogues of the Buddha I. 137-159]. Contd.	35
Question Paper (1)	37

Pali Sutta Piṭaka	37
Question Paper (2)	39
Buddhist Social Concepts	39
Question Paper (3)	41
Buddhist Art	41
New Reseach Data from Pali Texts	43
A . New Probes into the concept of NAMARUPA.	43

## No.1 - Brahmajāla Sutta: A Bumper Harvest of Unsound and Inaccurate Philosophical Speculations.

Some observations about the Dhamma in Buddhism.

- A.** The Buddha himself in the Ariyapariyesana sutta of the Majjhima Nikaya declares the subtlety of the truth or the **dhamma** he has discovered. It is difficult to comprehend, he says, because it appears anti-world [*paṭisotagāmi*] in character. It seems so because it goes against the grain of the world - i.e. of attachment. The people of the world are referred to as being addicted to or attached to things and persons of the world [*rāgarattā* and *ālayaratā ālayarāmā ālayasammuditā pajā*].
- B.** This **dharma** which the Buddha discovered after much striving [*kicchena me adhigataṃ*] is described as being profound [*gambhīro duddaso duranubodho*]. He therefore hesitates to preach it. But he is called upon to give it to mankind for its salvation. At least a few of them will comprehend it [*Bhavissanti dhammassa aññātāro*], we are told. Whether one calls it legend or history, Mahā Brahmā as the Great God of the Indians is said to have pleaded with a reluctant Buddha on this issue, and requested him to deliver to the world his newly discovered teaching.
- C.** This **dharma** is said to be totally wholesome, yielding good results at the

beginning, in the middle and at the end. It is this dharma which expounds the ideal of *brahmacariya* or total renunciation for transcendence from the ills of the world.

- D.** We also know in Buddhism of a twin concept called Dhamma and Vinaya. I would like to caution you with regard to these two words. First remember them as two different words, representing two different and distinct items. **Dhamma** refers to the basic teachings of Buddhism to which we have already referred, i.e. the message of salvation which the Buddha gives to mankind for their release from ills of samsāra. **Vinaya** refers to the code of monastic discipline which he laid down separately for the guidance of the lives of those who renounced their household life and took to a monastic way of living.

[You would also find in Buddhism and in Pali literature these two words jointly used as a single compound-word *dhamma-vinaya*. This means something entirely different. This word means no more than a 'religious institution'. It may be Buddhist or even non-Buddhist. Schools of religious training of **Alāra Kālāma** and **Uddaka Rāmaputta**, with large numbers of trainees, where Gotama undertook his early training as Buddha-aspirant are referred to by him as *dhammavinaya*.]

\* \* \*

- E.** This series of Public Lectures on Buddhism this year, in the year 2000 in the new millennium, is based on the **Dīgha Nikāya**. **Dīgha Nikāya** is the first of the five divisions of the Sutta Piṭaka [i.e. Dhamma] which are referred to as the **Nikāyas** in Pali and **Agamas** in Chinese [Pali also sometimes speaks of **Four Agamas**].

**Dīgha Nikāya** is so called because its suttas are somewhat unusually long. It has a collection of 34 suttas which are divided into three groups of 13, 10 and 11 suttas each, called Moralities [**Sīlakkhandha vagga**], Great

[**Mahā vagga**] and Pāṭika [**Pāṭika vagga**] Divisions respectively. Compared with the rest of the Nikāyas, the Digha suttas have a more or less historical narrative character, dealing even with myths and legends, much more than doctrinal, and also tend to be self advertising in an unusual manner. This amounts to, we dare say, almost being propagandist.

Today we deal with the **Brahmajāla**, the first sutta in the Moralities Division. Its title **Brahmajāla** means '**super-grade**' or **large-sized** net. As the first sutta in the entire Dhamma collection or the Sutta Piṭaka, the Buddhists seem to be anxious **to bag within it all the untenable and inaccurate philosophical speculations** which the Indians of the day were believed to be putting forward. The Buddhists not only attempt in their own way to make a comprehensive collection, a bumper harvest, but also **attempt to dismiss and dispose of them as being utterly baseless**. This sutta appears to be 'an attempted victory in debate over religious postulates of other prevalent contemporary creeds.' The sutta gives this as one possible label for this discourse: *Anuttaro saṅgāma vijayo = Incomparable victory in battle.*

While the main concern of the sutta remains the dismissal of the current 'unsound philosophical postulates' of the day, it cannot go unnoticed that the sutta is prefixed with the entire text dealing with the three-fold division of moral precepts or *sīla* which govern the life of the Buddhist disciple. They are admittedly the basic grounding, established on which the Buddhist disciple gets to his higher reaches of mind-culture [*samādhī*] and wisdom [*paññā*]. The sutta here tries to highlight the position of people anomalously praising the Buddha in terms of these perfections in basic moralities. The sutta tries thereby to prevent the worldlings from praising the Tathāgata for such elementary, inferior matters of moral practice. This inclusion provides adequately for the contrast that follows. [*Idaṃ kho taṃ bhikkhave appamattakaṃ*

*oramattakaṃ sīlamattakaṃ yena puthujjano Tathāgatassa vaṇṇaṃ vadamāno vadeyya. D.I.p.12]*

- F.** Over what do these ascetics and Brahmins debate? The subject is the **self** and the **world**. As man always did everywhere with regard to this subject, they try to relate these two to a fundamental issue of time, i.e. to the **past** and the **future**. In brief, it is the reality of man through time. The survival of the self being dear according to each one's expectations, some attempted to offer a religio-philosophical proof for its existence beyond death.

Our text puts it as: "There are some ascetics [*sramaṇas*] and Brahmins who are Eternalists, who proclaim the eternity of the self and the world in four ways."

It is conceded that India of the Buddha's day had already developed **mind culture** to such an extent that men with greater degrees of religious [or call it psychic] application could probe backwards into a very remote past, stretching through several births. This may stretch from one to several hundred thousands of births. It is a process of self-regression, attempted well before trying it out on others through hypnotic processes.

As our sutta clearly specifies, for this they needed effort, exertion, application, earnestness and right attention to a specific state of mental concentration. It must be admitted, that this implied a religious or spiritual culture certainly of a high order. What is argued out in our sutta is that this approach does not provide an answer to the problem of the ills of life. By seeing and knowing of a limited [certainly of a large] number of previous existences, they posit thereby eternity to the self and the world.

- G.** In the next two groups, i.e. numbers 2 and 3, they move backwards in life, not in terms of single births, from one to hundreds of thousands, but in larger blocks of **world cycles** or *kappa* as *vivaṭṭa kappa* or expanding universe and *samvatta kappa* or contracting universe. The Indians knew

of them as precisely as you do today when you speak of the **big bang** and the **big crunch**. In group 2, they speak in terms of single cycles while they move in group 3 to clusters of ten such cycles each as ten, twenty, thirty etc. Note that the dimensions of the mathematical sense of the Indians of the day, well over two or three millennia ago was both amazing and astounding.

- H. As the fourth category of such speculators, the sutta then presents to us **logicians** and **rationalists**. They have evidence which is neither intuitively gathered as those derived by the spiritually engaged nor any evidence which is scientifically acquired. They rely entirely on their skills of debate and argument and logical inference.

The sutta points out that the Tathāgata knows that adherence to such views leads to such-and-such destinations in another world. Being unattached to such views, the Tathāgata is perfectly released. What the sutta endeavors to establish here is that it is these higher grades of knowledge of the Tathāgata which bring true praise to him.

- I. Next we have ascetics and Brahmins who are **partly Eternalists** and **partly Non-Eternalists** who formulate such a theory in four different ways. The first of these mocks at the **theory that Mahā Brahmā is the Creator of the Universe**, saying that he was merely the first to arrive on the scene of an evolving universe.

Read our text: "Sooner or later after a long period this world contracts. At a time of contraction, beings are mostly reborn in the **Abhassara Brahma** world. And there they dwell, mind-made, feeding on delight, self-luminous, moving through the air, glorious - and they stay like that for a very long time.

"But the time comes, sooner or later after a long period, when this world begins to expand. In this expanding world an empty palace of

Brahmā appears. And then one being, from exhaustion of his life-span or of his merits, falls from the Abhassara world and arises in the empty Brahma palace. And there he dwells, mind-made ... glorious - and he stays like that for a very long time.

"Then in this being who has been alone for so long there arises unrest, discontent and worry, and he thinks: "Oh, if only some other beings would come here!" And other beings ... fall from the **Abhassara** world and arise in the Brahma palace as companions for this being. And there they dwell, mind-made ... and they stay like that for a very long time.

"And then, monks, that being who first arose there thinks: 'I am **Brahmā**, the great **Brahmā**, the Conquerer, the Unconquered, the All-Seeing, the All-Powerful, the Lord, the Maker and Creator, Ruler, Appointer and Orderer, Father of All That Have Been and Shall Be. These beings were created by me. How so? Because I first had this thought: 'Oh, if only some other beings would come here!' That was my wish, and then these beings came into this existence."

But those beings who subsequently arose think: "This, friends, is **Brahmā**...the Father of All That Have Been and Shall Be. How so? We have seen that he was here first, and that we arose after him."

\*\* In the Brahmajāla sutta, within such a structured pattern of thinking about Creation with a **Brahmā** [very much like **God** in Judeo-Christian thinking] at the head, in group No.1 certain ascetics and Brahmins who themselves develop higher grade spiritual powers differentiate between the Creator and the created, and therefore speak of **Eternity in part** and **non-Eternity in part**.

In Nos. 2 and 3, we have two mythical or legendary groups of celestial beings called Corrupted by Sport [*Kiḍḍāpadosikā*] and Corrupted in Mind [*Manopadosikā*], who after their demise from their own heavenly worlds

and birth in the human, develop spiritual powers and recount their past. They speak of their own limited life-spans as they remember as being finite and speak of the others as though they were infinite. In our sutta, this is made to look ridiculously their limited vision.

In group No.4, the Logicians arrive at their concept of **Eternity in part** and **non-Eternity in part** quite differently. They say: "**Whatever is called eye or ear or nose or tongue or body, that is impermanent**, unstable, non-eternal, liable to change. But **what is called thought, or mind or consciousness, that is a self that is permanent**, stable, eternal, not subject to change, the same for ever and ever."

- J. There are yet four other groups who on account of their limited spiritual attainments **claim the finiteness or otherwise of the world**. These are declared to be, like others, only view-points leading to such-and-such destinations and hence rejected as unacceptable.

Then there are ascetics and Brahmins who in truth do not know which is good or bad, right or wrong. Therefore they evade answering when questioned and dodge such issues. They are branded as **Eel-Wrigglers**. Under the fourth of these is brought the evading of answers to the ten unanswered questions [*avyākata dhamma*] in Buddhist texts.

Two groups are listed as **Chance-Originists** or those whose who speak of the origin of the self and the world by chance. They are 1. Those who have been Unconscious gods in their former lives and 2. Logicians and Reasoners.

Sixteen other ascetic and Brahmin groups proclaim a doctrine of **Conscious Post-Mortem Survival** of a **self which after death is healthy and conscious**, as material, immaterial etc.

Continuing this same pattern, another group proclaims a doctrine of



**Unconscious Post-Mortem Survival** of a self in eight different ways.

Yet another group of ascetics and Brahmins proclaim a doctrine of **Neither-Conscious-Nor-Unconscious Post-Mortem Survival** of a self in eight different ways.

**K.** There are some ascetics and Brahmins who are **Annihilationists**, who proclaim the annihilation, destruction and non-existence of beings, and they do so in seven different ways.

There are some ascetics and Brahmins who are proclaimers of Nibbāna Here and Now, and who proclaim Nibbana Here and Now for an existent being in five ways. They are:

1. In as far as this self, being furnished and endowed with the fivefold sense-pleasures, indulges in them, then that is when the self realizes the highest Nibbāna here and now.

2,3,4,5 And the four [1- 4] states of jhānas.

Concluding remarks from the Sutta.

" This, monks, the Tathāgata understands: These view-points thus grasped and adhered to will lead to such-and-such destinations in another world. This the Tathāgata knows, and more, but he is not attached to that knowledge. And being thus unattached he has experienced for himself perfect peace, and having truly understood the arising and passing away of feelings, their attraction and peril and the deliverance from them, the Tathāgata is liberated without remainder.

" These, monks, are those other matters, profound, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, excellent, beyond mere thought, subtle, to be experienced by the wise, which the Tathāgata, having realized them by his own super-knowledge, proclaims, and about which those who would truthfully praise the Tathāgata would rightly speak.

" When those ascetics and Brahmins who are speculators about the past, the future, or both, having fixed views, put forward views in sixty-two different ways, that is merely the feeling of those who do not know and see, the worry and vacillation of those immersed in craving.

" Whatever ascetics and Brahmins who are speculators about the past or the future or both, having fixed views on the matter and put forth speculative views about it, these are all trapped in the net with its sixty-two divisions, and wherever they emerge and try to get out, they are caught and held in this net.

" Monks, the body of the Tathāgata stands with the link that bound it to becoming cut. As long as the body subsists, devas and humans will see him. But at the breaking up of the body and the exhaustion of the life-span devas and humans will see him no more."

\*\* Original statements from the sutta about the ability of the ascetics and the Brahmins to arrive at different view-points about the self and the world. The basis on which they do it and the position of the Buddha in relation to them.

1. Idha bhikkhave ekacco samaṇo vā brāhmaṇo vā ātappam anvāya padhānaṃ anvāya anuyogaṃ anvāya appamādaṃ anvāya sammā manasikāraṃ anvāya tathārūpaṃ cetosamādhiṃ phusati yathāsamāhite citte anekavihiṭṭaṃ pubbe nivāsaṃ anussarati... D.I.13. § 31
2. Tayidaṃ bhikkhave Tathāgato pajānāti ime ditṭhiṭṭhānā evaṃgahitā evaṃparāmaṭṭhā evaṃgatikā bhavissanti evaṃ-abhisamparāyā'ti. Tañ ca Tathāgato pajānāti tato ca uttarītaram pajānāti. Tañ ca *pajānanaṃ na parāmasatī. Aparāmasato c'assa paccattaṃ yeva nibbuti viditā.* Vedanānaṃ samudayañ ca atthagamañ ca assādañ ca ādīnavañ ca nissaraṇaṃ ca yathābhūtaṃ viditvā anupādā vimutto bhikkhave Tathāgato. Ibid. p.16. § 36 [This is the basis and this is the stand-point from which the contemporary philosophical views are handled.]

3. Ime kho te bhikkhave dhammā gambhīrā duddasā duranubodhā santā paṇīṭā atakkāvacarā nipuṇā paṇḍitavedaniyā ye tathāgato sayamaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedeti yehi Tathāgatassa yathābhuccamaṃ vaṇṇamaṃ sammā vadamānā vadeyyuṃ. Ibid. \$ 37
4. Tatra bhikkhave ye te samaṇabrahamaṇā sassatavādā sassatamaṃ attānaṃ ca lokaṃ ca paññapenti catūhi vatthūhi tadapi tesamaṃ bhavataṃ samaṇabrāhmaṇānaṃ **ajānataṃ apassataṃ vedayitaṃ taṇhāgatānaṃ paritasita-vipphanditaṃ eva**. Ibid. p. 39. \$ 32. This is perhaps best translated as: The views of those venerable ascetics and Brahmins is no more than the sensory experiencing [**vedayitaṃ**] of those who do not know and do not see, i.e. lacking in knowledge and vision [**ajānataṃ apassataṃ**]. It is the very result of their agitation and perverse expression [resulting in **paritasita** and **vipphandita**] on account of their **being immersed in craving** [**taṇhāgatānaṃ**].



## No.2 - Sāmaññaphala Sutta: Fruits of Recluse ship in the Buddhist Order.

The first two lectures in the series on the Brahmajāla Sutta, I presume, would have given our listeners some ideas as to what the Buddha and the Buddhist texts attempt to tell us in their teachings. They primarily tell us about the Buddha's newly discovered message about the human predicament, i.e. man's real situation in life. Of course, we mean of men, women and children all included, without any discrimination of gender, caste or creed. The Buddha tells us how we have come to be here, as products of natural evolution [dismissing the idea of creation as fiction], whether we are really happy or not in our present plight, and how we could improve our present lot and get to a better situation if

we would choose to do so.

The suttas also present to us very honest assessments of contemporary religious and philosophical thinking in India at the time of the Buddha. Great religious teachers are presented to us, and their teachings are critically examined, giving everyone a chance to defend themselves. Even those who get convinced of the sublimity of the Buddha's teaching and choose to follow the way of life recommended by him are advised to move cautiously and rethink about the seriousness of the change they contemplate.

**A.** The **Sāmaññaphala** is the sutta No.2 of the Dīgha Nikāya. It comes to us as a dialogue between the Buddha and King Ajatasatthu of Magadha. It begins in a delightful setting of a beautiful full moon night when the king is presented sitting with his cabinet of ministers on an upper balcony of his palace. It immediately gives us a clue as to what kind of persons political leaders of a country should be. Not mere astute schemers who think solely in terms of power and profit in politics but have an all round sensitivity to things which are wholesome and beautiful, things which lend true joy to the human heart.

This sensitivity to genuine beauty is both inspiring and stimulating. It is not everyone who can sense it. Not those who seek after sensual pleasures. The Buddha's chief disciple Sariputta sings in praise of the beauty of the forests where the commoners and rustics can take no delight: *Ramañīyāni araṇyāni yattha na ramati jano*. But those with adequate spiritual cultivation delight therein: *Vītarāgā ramissantī*. Such beauty is not for seekers of sensual pleasures: *Na te kāmāgavesino*.

In such a moment that night King Ajatasatthu expresses his desire to visit a religious personality, a *sramaṇa* or *brāhmaṇa* in conversation with whom he may gain joy of heart - *yaṃ no payirupāsato cittaṃ pasīdeyya*. Even today, statesmen would do well to follow such prescriptions for

healthy and benevolent living. What a perfectly sound combination of material considerations and spiritual leanings.

On inquiry from the ministers, each one in turn recommends to the king that he should visit one of the six well known religious teachers of the day, starting with Pūraṇa Kassapa. The king listens in silence, and finally asks the Royal Physician Jīvaka who was in the assembly for his opinion. Jīvaka was a close and devoted associate of the Buddha and he recommends that the king pays him a visit.

- B.** Amidst great pomp and glory Ajatasatthu visits the Buddha that very night. The silence and solemnity of the place of the Buddha's residence, living with a vast retinue of one thousand two hundred and fifty monks, in fact, strikes fear in him. Cutting a long story short, he greets the Buddha and the community of monks and seeks permission from the Buddha to ask him a question.

Like in all other worldly professions where people get a training and see the results thereof after sometime, Ajātasatthu asks, can the Buddha indicate **any possible results, here and now, of living the life of a recluse in the Buddhist order** [*sandiṭṭhikam sāmāññaphalaṃ*]. The Buddha here is very cautious and asks the king whether he has put this same question to any other religious teachers of the land before this. This enables the sutta to place before the reader a complete survey of the teachings of the well known **Six Teachers** or ***Cha Satthāro***. And this from a very reliable reporter like the king of the land, and not from mere hearsay.

1. The king in his reply now enumerates in order the theories put forward by each one.
  - i. Pūraṇo Kassapo: Held the belief that no matter what evil deed a person does - killing, stealing, adultery etc., he thereby acquires no evil [*na karīyati pāpaṃ*]. Likewise, even with the greatest of

good deeds like giving, sacrificing, honesty and self-restraint, there is no acquisition of goodness [*natthi puññassa āgamo*].

The king concluded: In reply to my question regarding the immediate and visible results of recluseship Pūraṇo Kassapo put forward **a theory of inefficacy action** [*akiriyaṃ vyākās*].

- ii. Makkhaḷī Gosālo: His view was that there was no cause or reason for the defiling or purification of beings [*...ahetu appaccaya satta saṅkilissanti*]. The same is true for their purification. Striving, effort and endeavour are of no avail. In whatever state of existence they experience happiness or pain, it is on a principle of **Fatalistic Determinism** [*niyati-saṅgati-bhāva-pariṇatā*].

With perfect neutrality of neither approval nor disapproval, the king observed: Thus O Lord, Gosala did not answer my question. But he put forward a theory of terminating suffering [*dukkha*] through *samsāric* continuance [*sandhāvitvā samsarivā*].

- iii. Ajita Kesakambalī: He rejects the theory of *kamma*. Denies this world and denies a world beyond this. There are no religious men who have entered upon the right path who can speak with knowledge about this world and a world beyond. In brief, he is an annihilationist who speaks of the total destruction at death of this body made up of the four great elements. There is nothing beyond death [*Na hontī parammaraṇā ' ti*].

The king likewise concludes that he is an annihilationist and departs without comment.

- iv. Pakudho Kaccāyano: He speaks of **seven uncreated indestructible bodies**. They do not interfere with one another.

Nor do they subscribe to the happiness or unhappiness of one another. There are no activities like killing, or even seeing or hearing. Even if one beheads another with a sharp knife, one is only driving a weapon through seven bodies.

The king observes that Pakudha was only dodging the issue: *aññena aññaṃ vyākāsi*.

- v. Nigaṇṭho Nātaputto: He claims that Nigaṇṭhas are disciplined under the four-fold restraint [*catu-yāma-samvara-samvuto*]. Even before the Buddha, Pārsva Nātha, more or less, initiated the anti-Brahmanic protestant movement which resulted in the birth of Jainism. The Jainas were noted for their concepts of restraint, starting with the initial one of respect for all forms of life, declaring that non-violence was the highest form of ethic [*Ahimsā paramo dharmah*]. We are sorry that the four-fold restraint of the Nigaṇṭhas presented in our sutta does not seem to tally with that of the Jains known to us through the history of Indian religions. The Udumbarikasīhanāda Sutta at D.III. 48 gives a religiously more meaningful interpretation. But the Sāmaññaphala Sutta does not fail to mention the special feature of restraint as a characteristic of Jainism [*Ayaṃ vuccati mahārāja nigaṇṭho gatatto yatatto thitatto cā 'ti*].

The king still maintains that this was no adequate answer to his question. So he departs, with his question still unanswered.

- vi. Sañjayo Belaṭṭhiputto: He is declared to be the most foolish of the entire group [*Ayañ ca imesaṃ samaṇabrāhmaṇānam sabba-bālo sabba-mūlho*]. He evades answering all questions and is declared a wriggler.

It is at the end of all these that King Ajātasatthu decides to

visit the Buddha and question him on this self same topic.



## No.2 - Sāmaññaphala Sutta: Fruits of Recluse ship in the Buddhist Order. Contd.

[It is important to remind ourselves at the very outset that our sutta Sāmaññaphala is referred to by name in the earliest, i.e. Canonical, reference to early Buddhist literature. See the Cullavagga report of the activities of the First Buddhist Council at Vin. II. p.287].

- A. Social elevation and recognition of the Buddhist monk as against the ordinary layman. All religious mendicancy in India, i.e. those who went under the designation of *Samaṇa* and *Brāhmaṇa* was a prestigious institution and those who took to it earnestly with a keen sense of awareness were held in high esteem for special reasons. They were reviewed and assessed from time to time from diverse angles.
- B. Under the **Caturāsrama Dharma** of the Indians, i.e. of the Brahmanas, it was considered wise and desirable for people to move away from the involvement of the household life and seek life in the forest at the third stage or *āsrma* which is referred to as *Vānaprastha*. This would imply a greater degree of religiousness and spirituality as well as a nearness to the goal of their religious aspiration, namely Brahman. On the other hand, the Sramaṇa tradition implied a total renunciation of the household in toto. The concepts of *pabbajita* and *muni* also imply this. They both designate people who have gone forth.
- C. This sense of self-sought restraint and discipline on the one hand and the



association with the sense of divinity on the other, together with their leadership role in society, placed the religious men like the *sramaṇas* on a higher rung in society. They were to be necessarily respected by the rest of the community and be provided and looked after with regard to their frugal basic needs like food.

**D.** *Samaṇa* and *Brāhmaṇa*: their social acceptance and royal patronage.

1. In every home a regular allocation of food was being prepared for the visiting mendicant - *Paccati munino bhattaṃ thokathokaṃ kule*. The monk knows this and says that he would go on his alms round with confidence.
2. In the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta the Buddha himself says that in the Republic of the Vajjis they provide for the security of the worthy religious men [*arahants*] and see to it that they live in their country comfortably [*Kin ti te Ananda suttaṃ Vajjīnaṃ arahantesu dhammikārakkhavaranaṅgutī susaṃvihitā kin ti anāgatā ca arahanto vijitaṃ āgaccheyyūṃ āgatā ca arahanto vijite phāsu vahareyyun 'ti*. D.N.II. 75]. He adds that this respectful attitude towards the religious personnel in the country would contribute to the stability of the state [*Vuddhi yeva Ananda Vajjīnaṃ pāṭikārikhā no parihānī 'ti*. Ibid].
3. At D.N.I. 53ff. King Ajātasatthu repeatedly says that he could not show discourtesy to any *Sramaṇa* or *Brāhmaṇa* living in his kingdom [*Kathaṃ hi nāma mādiso samaṇaṃ vā brāhmaṇaṃ vā vijite vasantaṃ apasādetabbam maññeyyā 'ti*].

**E.** In such a society, the Buddha gets the king to declare and accept the social pre-eminence of the Buddhist monk over and above the laymen. In the Buddhist socio-religious hierarchy, **even a slave who takes to the life of a Buddhist disciple** [*dāso kammaṅkaro ... anagāriyaṃ pabbajito*] rises well above the level even of the king of the land and is entitled to receive from

him both honour and respect as well as the provision of all his personal needs like the four-fold requisites and adequate personal security [*Atha naṃ mayaṃ eva abhivadeyyāma pi paccuṭṭheyyāma 'pi āsanena 'pi nimanteyyāma abhinimanteyyāma pi naṃ cīvara-piṇḍapāta-senāsana-gilānapaccaya-bhesajja-parikkhārehi dhammikaṃ 'pi 'ssa rakkhāvaraṇa-guttiṃ saṃvidaheyyāmā 'ti op.cit. p.61]. .*

This is given as the very first among many results, here and now, of being a samaṇa in Buddhism. It is added that he would thereafter attain to further states of tranquillity and serenity [loc.cit.].

**F.** Religious and Spiritual Foundations of Monastic Life [*Somañña*] in Buddhism - Step by step.

1. This is a very vital stage in our study of the **Sāmaññaphala Sutta**. From now on, our study of Buddhism is not going to be a mere theoretical one. It is going to be **a study of a living reality**. Both its **starting point** and its **end point** are indicated. Out of a deep sense of conviction, and with an equally keen awareness, some one is seen starting on a venture, with a desire to achieve what he has set his heart upon.
2. Here the Buddha unmistakably traces the beginning of a Buddhist way of life to the emergence of the Buddha himself. There comes to be a Fully Enlightened Buddha in the world, he says [*Tathagat loka uppajjati arahaṃ sammāsambuddho*. D.N.I. 62]. On hearing the wholesome dhamma preached by him, a lay person gains **trust and confidence in him**. The word used here for this is **saddhā**. Its Sanskrit equivalent is **śraddhā**. It literally means to **'set one's heart on it'**. Now I would request you to be careful with those books and those persons who tell you that there is no **blind faith in Buddhism**. Please make sure that both you and your writers understand what that means. As they say in English Do not throw away the baby with the bath water. Both **trust** and

**acceptance on trust** are needed here.

3. This is how our Sutta puts it [*So dhammaṃ deseti...taṃ dhammam sutvā Tathāgate saddhaṃ paṭilabhati.* loc.cit.]. That confidence immediately stimulates the listener to **initiate the plunge into the new life** [*sampakkhandana*] that is revealed. And thereupon activity in the newly chosen life begins. There is no dilly-dallying. That gaining or acquisition of trust or confidence is referred to as **saddhā-paṭlābha**. Its intensity, through the depth of its conviction, drives one to renounce and choose the life of the monk as the surer and speedier way to transcendence [*Nayidaṃ sukaraṃ agāraṃ ajjhāvasatā ekanta-paripuṇṇam ekanta-parisuddhaṃ saṃkhalikhitam brahmacariyaṃ carituṃ. Yannūnā ' haṃ kesamassuṃ ohāretva kāsāyāni vatthāni acchādetvā agāraṃ anagāriyaṃ pabbajeyyan ' ti.* loc.cit.].

**G.** As Samaṇas, the first stage of Development of the Buddhist Disciple has to be Discipline of Body and Mind and Correction of Attitudes to Life.

1. Our sutta begins its concept of discipline with a term which immediately implies a somewhat organized and developed administrative machinery, namely the **Pātimokkha**. It begins by saying that the 'Buddhist disciple is disciplined by the restraints imposed by the **Pātimokkha** [*Evaṃ pabbajito samāno pātimokkha-saṃvara-saṃvuto viharati.* loc.cit.].
2. It must be noted that in the early days of the Sāsana, the discipline of the disciple who has taken to the monastic life **does not begin with a legalized version of rules and regulations**. Such a structure took more than a decade or two to acquire its stature. It **grew out of timely necessity**, as the Buddha himself indicated to his chief disciple Sariputta that it should really happen that way [See Vin.III. p.9f.]. It was **the spirit of the Dhamma** and the **manner in which it was imparted by**

**the Master** which made them earnest pursuants of the path to liberation. Therefore note in passing that the word **Pātimokkha** in the above quotation is used somewhat retrospectively.

3. It was the pre-legal moral injunctions which went under the name of ***sīla***, **without any built-in authority for prosecution or punishment** that safeguarded the moral tone of the Buddhist disciple which were graded as primary, medium and major. Never forget that to these restraints in word and deed [*kāya-kamma-vacī-kammena samannāgato kusalena* loc. cit.] were added a few more items bringing about further discipline and restraint in the area of the mind as well. They are *a.* keeping watch over the sense organs or sensual gratification [*indriyesu gutta-dvāro*], *b.* mental alertness and awareness [*sati-sampajaññaena samannāgato*] and *c.* a spirit of contentment [*santuṭṭho*]. These are all regarded as companion virtues that go along with *sīla*.



## No.2 - Sāmaññaphala Sutta. Contd. 3. Three-tiered culture: ***Sīla-Samādhī-Paññā***.

1. In this three-tiered ***Sīla-Samādhī-Paññā*** religious culture of Buddhism, everyone whether monk or layman, **had to begin with *sīla***, the first item of **basic grounding in moral rectitude** and **moral fulfillment**. To the monks in particular, it is said that they should aspire to perfect themselves in ***sīla*** in order to achieve success in their spiritual life as well as to acquire communal harmony in the Saṅgha: ***sīlesv' ev' assa paripūrakārī***. [Akaṅkheyya Sutta at M.N.I.33].
2. ***Sīla*** as moral injunctions is calculated to bring about **discipline in external**

**conduct**, namely **in word** and **deed**. It is interesting to observe that the *sīla* listing in the **Sāmaññaphala Sutta** [D.N. I.63ff.] begins with the first three items of the **kāyakamma** or bodily activities [killing, stealing and sexual impropriety] and the four items of speech or **vacīkamma** [lying, slander, harsh words and empty words] in the traditional listing of the **ten evil deeds** or **dasa-kamma-patha**.

3. These are very valid as *sīla* in the **daily life of the layman too**. It is out of these, with a few necessary modifications and adjustments, **replacing celibacy with chastity**, that the basic **five precepts** of *Pañcasīla* for the **lay community** are structured.
4. From among the items of *sīla* which follow thereafter, three more items [1. keeping away from taking solid foods after mid-day or *vikāla-bhojana*, 2. keeping away from musical and theatrical performances or *nacca-gīta-vādita-visūkadassana*, and resorting to physical adornment or *mālā-gandha-vilepana-dhāraṇa-mañḍna-vibhūsaṇa*, and 3. avoiding the use of luxuriously comfortable beds and chairs or *uccāsayana-mahāsayana*] are picked up and added on to the *Pañcasīla* of the **lay community** to **make** for them **a set of higher observances** on special days like the *uposatha* of the full moon and the new moon. It is to be noted that there is evidence of this grooming for the lay folk called the *aṭṭhaṅga-uposatha* from very early days of the Sāsana. This is essentially a basic training or *sikkhā* in **restraint** and **discipline**. The Buddha would list this under *saṃyama* and *dama*. These are **the more fundamental initial retreats that Buddhists need today**, much **more than meditation retreats**, on a weekly, fortnightly or at least on a minimum of monthly basis. These can come only via basic training in *sīla*. Psychologists, world over, are now agreeing on this.
5. We have already indicated in an earlier lecture that on the perfection of the discipline in *sīla*, which is basically physical, there had to be a follow up of keeping watch over one's sense organs or sensual gratification. Into this is

to be grafted mental alertness and awareness and finally a spirit of contentment. Although we find this as an organic part of the monk's training, there seems to be no reason whatsoever why it should not be the basic ingredient for the training of all humans, men, women and children to fit them into an acceptable pattern of human culture. Here again, the psychologists and even the educationists of the western world, particularly of the United States have awakened to this.

6. Very many educationists in the U.S.A. are now redrafting their school curriculum, restating the old concepts of the **3 R's** of reading, writing and (a)rithmetics to contain more meaningful and constructive ideas like **respect, responsibility and readiness to learn**. What wonderfully vibrant new R's they are. We know and we have seen this now actually happening in the United States. Of course, not in every State there. That is expecting too much.



## No.2 - Sāmaññaphala Sutta. Contd. 4. Post-*Sīla* Prerequisites for the Jhānas.

- A. Having acquired the necessary **personal restraint** of *Samatha* through *Sīla* and the other associated attitudinal changes like contentment enumerated earlier, **the Buddhist disciple** who has seriously taken to *sāmañña* or the strict life of renunciation of a *samaṇa*, now selects a suitable place [cut off from the crowds = *vivittaṃ senāsanaṃ*] which is conducive to a life of contemplative development through self-examination or intensive self-purge [= *jhāna*].

1. He rids his mind of **excessive attachment** to things of the world

[*abhijjhaṃ loke pahāya*]. Likewise, he cleanses his mind of **conflict** [*vyāpāda-dosaṃ pahāya*] which brings him into harmonious relations with the entire world of living things. He discovers equally well the danger of **lethargy and dullness of mind** [*thīnamiddha*] and illumines his world with light and awareness [*ālokakasaññī satoṣampajāno*]. **Over-excited restlessness** [*uddhacca-kukkucca*] is discovered to be equally baneful and he clears his mind of it and acquires inner tranquillity [*ajjhataṃ vūpasanto*]. Finally he eliminates from his mind **all traces of doubt** [*vicikicchā*] with regard to what is declared as wholesome ways of living [*kusalesu dhammesu*]. This process of cleansing, according to Buddhist teachings, well and truly constitutes pre-requisites to spiritual adventures on *jhānic* or meditative practices.

2. These preliminary **results of inner cleansing** which in our Sutta a real *samaṇa* seems to be required to undertake does give the disciple an immense sense of **joy** and **delight** - *pāmojja* followed by *pīti*, that his **physical body thereby acquires tremendous composure and unshakable steadiness** which is referred to as *passaddhi*. This level of physical steadiness [which immediately follows] seems to obviously shut out and eliminate all sensitivity to pain that this negatively resulting state is called **happiness** or *sukha* [*passaddha-kāyo sukhaṃ vedeti*].
3. In natural succession, this state of happiness seems to enable the mind **to gather itself together** - *sukhino cittaṃ samādhīyati*. It is not concentrating on any single thing. The mind learns to stay within; not to dart out, stirred up by incoming sensory stimuli. If one reads our Sutta carefully, this is where we begin entry into the **First Jhāna**. We must not fail to note the amount of preliminary work that has gone into it.
4. Now the disciple cuts himself off by choice from sensory

gratifications or *kāma* [which a lay person may normally be entitled to enjoy], as well as from disallowed evil ways of life or *akusala dhamma*. This **severance** itself is said to be the **source of joy and inspiration** at the level of this **First Jhāna** [*vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ paṭhamajjhānaṃ*].

5. The natural order hereafter is to proceed via 2, 3, and 4 of the **Jhānas** at the **rūpī** level or the plane of material existence. At each stage one keeps gradually getting rid of even subtler trains of thinking, acquiring at the stage of the **Second Jhāna** the **comfort of the joy** of more and more inner tranquillity [*samādhijam pītisukhaṃ dutiyajjhānaṃ*]. At the **Third Jhāna** level one has gained mastery to convert this comfort to one of perfect neutrality and abide therein. Finally at the **Fourth Jhāna** one totally does away with both comforts and discomforts and even feelings [*somanassa domanassa*] relating to them. It is a totally purged cleanliness of body and mind, heading in the right direction. It is from this stage onwards that **functionally fruitful knowledge** is said to start functioning.



## No.2 - Sāmaññaphala Sutta. Contd. 5. Jhānas as Indian Spiritual Exercises and their nearness or otherwise to Buddhist Nirvanic Release.

1. It is to be remembered that Gotama as a Buddha-aspirant was already initiated up to the eighth of the pre-Buddhist **Jhānas** by the two teachers



- Alāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta with whom he undertook training and was assured of complete graduation. But knowing what he was seeking, Gotama was not satisfied with what he achieved. It did not enable him to pull out of the ills of samsāric continuance. It is for this and this very reason alone that he left his erst-while teachers, somewhat disappointed.
2. As the Enlightened Buddha too, he makes the same observation, joining the critics who question the transcendental value of these **Jhānas**. At A.N. IV. 430 ff. the Buddha says that [it is generally believed by some that] the attainment of the these eight **Jhānas** is equated to reaching the end of the world [*Ayaṃ vuccati brāhmaṇā bhikkhu lokassa antaṃ āgamma lokassa ante viharati.*]. It is here that the Buddha joins the critics [*Aññe evaṃ āhaṃsu*] who say that in all these instances, **one is still involved with the world** [*lokapariyāpanno*] and that in such a state one is not withdrawn from the world [*anissaṭo lokamhā 'ti.*].
  3. At this stage, at A.N. IV. 430 ff., the Buddha provides a very clear answer **as to how one unmistakably pulls out of the world**. It clearly states that one has **to terminate all forms of sensory awareness and cognitive knowledge** [*saññā-vedayita-nirodhaṃ upsampajja viharati.*]. This is not the end in itself. But it opens out for the telescopic wisdom which leads to the total elimination of all defiling traits of character [*Paññāya c' assa disvā āsavā parikkhīṇā honti.*]. Such a disciple has truly come to the end of the world and dwells at its end

[*Ayaṃ vuccati brāhmaṇā bhikkhu lokassa antaṃ āgamma lokassa ante viharati.*]. He is truly crossed over the world, with no attachment whatsoever [*Tiṇṇo loke vasattikan 'ti.*].



## No.3 - Ambaṭṭha Sutta. The story of an arrogant young Brahmin scholar and the confrontation with the Sakyans who are allegedly rude to him.

1. Today we are with the third of our Suttas of the Dīgha Nikāya. The Brahmajāla [No.1] comprehensively dealt with the highly speculative contemporary religious and philosophical views of the ancient Indians - their ideas as recorded in the Pali texts and the very specific manner in which the Buddha examines them, shows the limitations within which these thinkers operated and the non-acceptability of their views from the Buddhist point of view.
2. The Sāmaññaphala [No. 2] which is clearly meant to be an exposition of the visible fruits of Buddhist recluse-ship in this very life, introduced us to a reasonably good class room study of the views of the so-called Six Teachers [*Cha Satthāro*] of the day. They are cleverly presented as narrated by King Ajātasatthu himself.
3. Thereafter was presented the eminence of the Buddhist disciples as a social group in themselves in the midst of the people. Spiritually speaking, as he perfects himself in moral rectitude and achieves inner tranquillity, the Buddhist disciple is presented as gaining greater and more wholesome rewards of living the life of a *samaṇa*. He ends up reaching the goal of his spiritual life, namely the total emancipation from the ills of existence through his total- clearing-wisdom called *paññā*.
4. The subject of our discussion today, **Ambaṭṭha Sutta**, gives us an insight to the ramified question of caste evaluation in ancient India. Having had a religious sanction from as far back as the tenth Mandala of the Rig Veda for the creation of man in human society with a vertically graded

- value system, pride and prejudices of the Indian caste system is a die-hard institution even today. We discover the Buddha himself drawn into this ever-heated discussion as to who heads the caste ladder in Indian society.
5. The Sutta discloses several distasteful situations brought about through these age-old ideas associated with these caste divisions and gradations. The concept of **Conquerer** and the **Conquered**, with the embedded idea of the **Invader** and the **Native** appears to be one of the major issues of caste consciousness. The Rig Veda speaks of the invading Aryans having driven the **Inferior Slave or Menial Group into Hiding** [*Yo dāsaṃ varṇaṃ adharaṃ guhā akah*]. Ambaṭṭha Brāhmaṇa, the chief character in our story, is a distinguished pupil of the renowned Brahman Priest Pokkharasādi. He has a grouse that he has been publicly insulted by the Sakyas [i.e. the Buddha's clan people] on many occasions.
  6. On hearing of the Buddha's arrival in his city of Icchānaṅgala, Pokkharasādi tells his very distinguished pupil Ambaṭṭha Brāhmaṇa to go and ascertain whether the Buddha is such a distinguished and eminent personality as he is reputed to be [*Taṃ kho pana bhagavantam Gotamaṃ evaṃ kalyāṇo kittisaddo abbhuggato*. D.N. I.87]. But we find Pokkharasādi made to look somewhat silly in giving his pupil as the yardstick of measurement to gauge the reality of the Buddha's reputation their own old Brahmanic 'lore of the thirty-two physical distinctions' [*āgatāni kho tāta Ambaṭṭha amhākaṃ mantesu dvattimsa-mahā-purisa-lakkhaṇāni yehi samannāgatassa mahā-purisassa dve gatayo bhavanti anaññā...Ahaṃ kho pana tāta Ambaṭṭha mantānaṃ dātā tvam mantānaṃ paṭiggahetā ' ti*. Ibid.p.88f.]



### No. 3 - Ambaṭṭha Sutta. Contd.

1. Conceited with his sense of pride about the caste superiority of the Brahmins, young Ambaṭṭha makes a foul start with the Buddha, accusing the Sakyas of not paying due respect to the Brahmins. This he does up to a third time.
2. Whether the Buddha actually did so or not, the Sutta presents the Buddha taking a drastic line of action of treating him like an amateur wrestler, of putting him on the floor and throwing him out of the ring. He re-enters with humility and then he is taken up. The Buddha seems to go on the better known and unquestionable Indian legends about caste origins and establishes that Ambaṭṭha, after all, descends from an inter-marriage of not very high esteem.
3. Ambaṭṭha is made to admit that he descends from a clan by the of Kaṇhāyāna. As his name suggests, it is thereafter established that he is born-black. This immediately implies that caste distinctions and caste discriminations have their roots running deep into ethnicity and skin colour, not only running into ancient civilizations time wise, but also place wise in different parts of the world. It even crosses over to other areas, besides skin colour, like physical features as well. The Vedic Aryans who conquered the natives of India refer to them as **inferior-colour-ones who are rather flat-nosed**.
4. The story is pushed further to say that these black people descend from a slave girl. To the Indian mind, this is about the lowest level to which the origin of any social group could be traced back. Even today, things are not very different, although people wish they were. In some multi-ethnic countries, they wish the black and whites not to be segregated as though they were not different. They wish very much and try to introduce the de-segregated schools. But wishes are not horses. If they were, then beggars

would be kings.

5. We need also to mention here once again, out of a sense of honesty, that submerged under the stigmatizing story of the ethnic black origin of Ambaṭṭha and clouded in the midst of confusing arguments of caste inferiority, is a trace of a story on the side of the Sakyans to whose group the Buddha belongs that would bring them no credit when judged by normal Indian standards social propriety.
6. According to the story presented here, the origin of the Sakyan clan is traced back to a set of princes who were driven into exile into the Himalayan forests and while living there, for fear of caste contamination married their own sisters and propagated their family line. But we know from the Indian ethics of the Vedic Aryans that this was a crime that was highly frowned upon. The amorous relations of Yama, a Vedic God of high repute, towards his sister brought censure upon him from other gods of the pantheon. Incest was highly stigmatized in that cultural milieu. Be that as it may.
7. Thereafter many questions arising out of mixed marriages, and the status of the resulting progeny, are discussed and finally on this issue the Buddha is presented as quoting a Divine Personality named Brahmā Sanañkumaro. He says:

If people speak in terms of caste, Kshatriyas are the best among them. In the midst of gods and men, he who is endowed with correct knowledge and noble conduct is supreme.

The Buddha then is made to endorse it and uphold it. **Aham' pi Ambaṭṭha evaṃ vadāmi.**



## No.3 B - Ambaṭṭha Sutta. Concluded.

- A. Before we bring our study of the **Ambaṭṭha Sutta** to a close today, I would like to make a few observations on the roaring success of our sutta. Even our next sutta, **Soṇadaṇḍa**, is very similar in character. In their Pali version, i.e. as is given to the Buddhists or to the converts to the creed, if no more than that, we find in them a couple of very high scoring points in favour of the Buddha and his religion.
- i. The Buddha indisputably establishes the fact that, with regard to the high-caste claim of Ambaṭṭha, evidence established in society proves the contrary. Through a story handed down in the society of the day, whether we regard it as legend or history, Ambaṭṭha is shown to be a lamentable product of a mixed marriage. With all his skill in argument, Ambaṭṭha is shown to be unable to disown it.
  - ii. The Buddha also directs a two-pronged attack on Ambaṭṭha's caste supremacy claim, drawing once again from **contemporary socio-religious thinking**. He maintains that at social level [*khattiyo seṭṭho janetasmim̐ ye gotta-paṭisāriṇo*], the Kshatriyas are deemed the highest among social grades. Speaking **as a religious leader** who **upholds a higher grade of values even in social thinking**, he fully endorses the religiously universally accepted view [since it is said to be transmitted by Brahmā Sanaṅkumāro from among the highest in the world of Divines] that persons **endowed with wisdom and comparable noble conduct** [*vijjā-caraṇa-saṃpanno so seṭṭho deva-mānuse*] are the **truly noble everywhere**.

- B.** At this point, the Buddha introduces to Ambaṭṭha, under **wisdom and comparable noble conduct** [*vijjā-caraṇa-sampanno*] the complete system of Buddhist religious culture undertaken by a disciple, up to the point of his reaching total liberation in Nirvana [*.. nāparaṃ itthattāyā ' ti pajānāti.*].
- C.** Thereafter the Buddha indicates four possibilities of spiritual decadence and degradation for **other recluses and brahmins** who without perfecting themselves in this mode of **wisdom and comparable noble conduct** sponsored in Buddhism, resort to various forms of ascetic practices like forest dwelling or making fire-sacrifices etc. Ambaṭṭha, his teacher Pokkharasādi and their entire school of followers are categorised as falling into this decadent group.
- D.** The Buddha thereafter enumerates, one by one, numerous shortcomings of the Brahmins of the day, including his teacher Pokkharasādi, and firmly declares that their spiritual claims as well the privileges they enjoy from the kings of the day are totally unjustifiable. Finally the Buddha winds up his chastisement of Ambaṭṭha and his teacher of being sages with these words: **So then, Ambaṭṭha neither are you a Rishi, nor your teacher, nor do you live under the conditions under which the Rishis lived.** Indeed an inescapable accusation. Neither Ambaṭṭha nor his teacher seem to attempt it.
- E.** The total report of what took place between the Buddha and his pupil Ambaṭṭha brings about a total revolution in the thinking world of Pokkharasādi. He totally condemns his pupil for the impropriety of his arrogant conversation with the Buddha, and literally kicks him off his seat.
- F.** Pokkharasādi thereupon goes to the Buddha in an apologetic mood and asks for forgiveness for his pupil's insolent behaviour. The Buddha readily forgives him and wishes him well. Pokkharasādi becomes a stream-winner and he and his sons, his wife and his people betakes to the

Buddha, Dhamma and the Sangha as their refuge. He becomes a life-long patron of the Buddha.



## **No.4 A Sonadaṇḍa Sutta. [D.N.I. 111-126 / Dialogues of the Buddha I. 137-159]**

1. The tactfully manipulated crushing defeat which the Buddha imposed on the conceited and arrogant young Brahmin Ambaṭṭha brought to the Buddha a remarkable victory in the conversion of Brahmin Pokkarasādi who became a life long convert. The Digha Nikaya thereafter records for us a series of conversions of Brahmins of very great stature like Sonadaṇḍa and Kūṭadanta.
2. According to the Ambaṭṭha Sutta, the Buddha while he was wandering through Kosala with his retinue of about five hundred monks arrived in the Kosalan village of Ukkaṭṭha which was gifted to Pokkharasādi by King Pasenadi of Kosala. It was there that he had his encounter with Ambaṭṭha and effected the conversion of Pokkarasādi.
3. Here we meet the Buddha wandering through Anga and reaching Campā. Here lives Brahmin Sonadaṇḍa as a beneficiary of King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha, The Buddha's reputation as a great saintly personality was widely spread among the people Campā. They have heard about the quality of his teachings and the type of religious life he recommends. So they started visiting him in very large numbers.
4. On seeing these crowds going to call on the Buddha, Sonadaṇḍa himself



- decides to pay him a visit. In fact, he wants to join the crowd and go with them. But he is dissuaded by his Brahmin colleagues and friends saying that Sonadaṇḍa is too prestigious a person to do that. They insist that it is the Buddha who should call on Sonadaṇḍa.
5. Sonadaṇḍa takes up the challenge and clarifies to everybody the social and spiritual loftiness of the Buddha's character. He insists that the Buddha being a visitor to their town, it is their duty to pay him a courtesy call. Sonadaṇḍa's friends are all convinced and they all agree to visit the Buddha all together.
  6. But as Sonadaṇḍa was drawing nearer to the Buddha, he began to entertain certain misgivings. He feared that if the Buddha corrected him in public, in the presence of his followers, with regard to modes of questioning and answering, that he would lose his prestige with them and that loss of prestige would result in loss of affluence. For he argued that their affluence and prosperity is built upon their prestige and reputation [*yasoladdhā kho pan ' amhākaṃ bhogā*]. .
  7. Being in this utter conflict, he very much wished that the Buddha questioned him on the **tevijjā** of his own tradition [*sake ācariyake tevijjake pañhaṃ puccheyya*] so that he could win his heart by his answers [*Addhā vat' assāhaṃ cittaṃ ārādheyyaṃ pañhassa veyyākaraṇenā 'ti*].
  8. Fully comprehending the wishes of Sonadaṇḍa, the Buddha asks him the direct question as to the **Brahmin requirements which make a Brahmin**. What entitles a Brahmin to make a true claim that he is a Brahmin, without being guilty of uttering a falsehood? Sonadaṇḍa was very happy that the Buddha questioned him exactly as he expected and that he could win him over with his reply. He little realized what he was in for.



## No. 4 B. Sonadaṇḍa Sutta. [D.N.I. 111-126 / Dialogues of the Buddha I. 137-159]. Contd.

1. **Sonadaṇḍa** gleefully replies, drawing on the wisdom of his Brahmanic tradition and tells the Buddha that five things, starting with 1. good birth on one's mother's and father's sides [*ubhato sujāto ...*] and including 2. technical training [*ajjhāyako mantadharo...*], 3. physical personality [*abhirūpo dassanīyo...*], 4. virtue [*sīlavā hoti vuddha-sīlī...*], 5. wisdom [*paṇḍito ca hoti medhāvī...*] makes the true Brahmin.
2. Thereupon the Buddha, very subtly and skillfully makes the Brahmin concede the possibility of abandoning, one by one, the first three requirements which he declared in terms of his Brahmanical learning to be basics for the making of a true Brahmin, leaving him with only virtue and wisdom. We have no doubt **Sonadaṇḍa** knew what he was talking about. But it did excite as well as irritate **Sonadaṇḍa's** disciples. **They protested aloud** that **Sonadaṇḍa** was playing into the hands of the Buddha. They complained that the Buddha was decrying the caste superiority of the Brahmins and that he was underrating the value of Brahmanic learning.
3. But the Buddha knew propriety of procedure in debating. He was not to be brow-beaten by those vociferous Brahmin pupils of **Sonadaṇḍa**. Buddha suggested that if they thought their teacher was not competent enough to argue with the Buddha, they could very well retire him and take up the challenge themselves. Otherwise they should honourably leave it to **Sonadaṇḍa** to carry on the conversation with the Buddha.

4. **Sonadaṇḍa** thereupon comes forward apologetically and undertakes to deal with his disciples in a fitting manner [*Tiṭṭhatu bhavaṃ Gotamo. Tuṇhī bhavaṃ Gotamo hotu. Ahaṃ eva tesaṃ sahadhammena paṭivacanaṃ karissāmī 'ti.*]. He says " I tell you I do not depreciate our colour, nor our verses, nor our birth."
5. **Sonadaṇḍa** now speaks as an **enlightened Brahmin**. He points to his nephew Aṅgaka who is in the assembly and argues in this manner. " I know this young man Aṅgaka is endowed with the first three **Brahmin virtues** of colour, good birth and technical training. But if he is given to the evils of violating the five moral precepts, from destruction of life to addiction to intoxicants and drugs, what good will these three **Brahmin virtues** do? It is the possession of the last two items of 4. virtue and 5. wisdom which will qualify him to be truly called a Brahmin.
6. **Sonadaṇḍa** himself admits, **on being asked by the Buddha**, that in the absence of even one of these two latter items that it would not be possible to call one truly a Brahmin [*Imesaṃ pana Brāhmaṇa dvinnm aṅgānaṃ sakkā ekaṃ aṅgaṃ thapayitvā ekena aṅgena samannāgataṃ brāhmaṇaṃ paññāpetuṃ. Brāhmaṇo 'smī 'ti ca vadamāno sammā vadeyya na ca pana musāvādaṃ āpajjeyyā 'ti.*].

\*\*\* This brings us to a very vital point in the study of religious history via Buddhism. Here we see the Buddha's keen desire to transcend all sectarian differences on the basis of creeds and to bring to mankind a Universal Ethic of Good Living so that there may be Peace on Earth and Goodwill among Men.



**No.4 C. Sonadaṇḍa Sutta. [D.N.I. 111-126 /**

## Dialogues of the Buddha I. 137-159]. Contd.

1. Leaving aside all other considerations which the Brahmins believed were pre-requisites for the making of a true Brahmin, Sonadaṇḍa himself admits that virtue [*sīla*] and wisdom [*paññā*] are indispensably needed for the making of a true Brahmin. Sonadaṇḍa makes a very Buddhist like declaration on this issue. He admits that it is the opinion of the world at large: that virtue [*sīla*] and wisdom [*paññā*] are the highest valued things in the world [*Sīla-paññānañ ca pana lokasmim aggaṃ akkhāyati.*].
2. The Buddha then corroborates it and asks Sonadaṇḍa to elaborate on these two concepts further. Sonadaṇḍa confesses that his knowledge of the subject is very limited and prevails upon the Buddha to clarify it.
3. Like in all the suttas studied so far, the very dramatic situation is now created for the presentation of the Buddhist position with regard to the carefully integrated system of wisdom building via the three-tiered way of **a.** moral ground-work, followed by the **b.** intricately nurtured mind culture, ending up in the final blossoming of **c.** supra-mundane wisdom.
4. This wisdom referred to in Buddhism [*paññā*] is nothing of worldly-ingenuity type. It is well and truly transcendental. It grows naturally out of the gradual and successful withdrawal from all that is worldly. The **sīla** in Buddhism gradually paves the way for it.
5. **Sīla** primarily makes good men, women and children out of the people of the world. For people of the world, by their very nature, give into the attractions, or in other words to the gratification of sense desires. Few in the world would see in it anything undesirable or harmful. This, it must be noted, is one of the first and keenest observations made by the Buddha about the people of the world. That they are inclined to be attracted by the world. That they are irretrievably plunged in it.

6. Call this an error of judgement or an act of sinning or by whatever name one chooses to do so. It is not done out of the pressure of a power outside or beyond the humans. It is our own human weakness within. But it is corroding and self-devastating. To challenge it and resist it is like swimming up stream against the current - *paṭisota-gāmī*. The new trend of psychological thinking in the English-speaking world refers to this as **delay gratification**.
7. This is the direction in which *sīla* moves in Buddhism. The awareness of the need for the goodness which *sīla* brings about must be felt by the humans out of a **true sensitivity** to the **state of unsatisfactoriness of our own lives in the world**. This is the genesis or the beginning of the fundamental Buddhist theory of the **Four Noble Truths**. We begin with the first one of *dukkha* or **unsatisfactoriness**. Our sensitivity firstly to the problems our own physical and mental health, each one severally for himself or herself, of our own body and mind.
8. All students of Buddhism, **Buddhism of Shakyamuni Buddha**, must proceed on these lines, keeping in mind the order of priorities, as enunciated **in the early Buddhist texts preserved in Pali**.

Buddhist Literay Studies Series Concluded. 07.10. 00



## Question Paper (1)

IBU - Penang Campus 2000

Professor Dhammavihari

Pali Sutta Piṭaka

**Answer five questions only**

1. Discuss the unenviable position of the Great Commentator Buddhaghosa who appears caught in between the unassailable recorded literary history on the one hand and the vibrant contemporary and conflicting tradition of his day. Adequately illustrate your answer.
2. Either - Adduce sufficient and convincing reasons for Buddhaghosa's opting to refer to Sutta Piṭaka as consisting of *catasso saṅgītiyo* [four text collections].
3. Or - Dīghabhāṇakas of a later date expel the Khuddaka Collection from the Sutta Piṭaka. How far can you probe into the why and the wherefore of this?
4. In the classificatory arrangement of the contents and in the handling of doctrinal material, the Majjhima and the Samyutta show distinctly different lines of development. Discuss, illustrating with examples.
5. Either - Present the structure of a Jātaka as a piece of Pali Buddhist literature and assess what you consider to be their areas of true Buddhist value.
6. Or - In the Jātaka Collection, compilers of stories of both past and present, seems at times to manipulate direct assaults and harsh ridicule at their rival contemporaries. Critically examine and illustrate with a few stories known to you.
7. As items of Buddhist Pali literature, Thera- and Therī- Gāthā play a vital role in the propagation and glorification of the Sāsana. Illustrate with a few personalities from the poems.
8. Gāthā literature [metrical compositions] of the Sutta Piṭaka, in addition to being vibrant expositions of the teachings of the Master, are in themselves

invaluable documents of propagandist value as biographies of early Buddhist disciples. Discuss in relation to the Thera- and Theri- Gāthā in particular.

9. Describe and account for the tremendous popularity of the Dhammapada as a handbook of Buddhist philosophy for day to day life. Illustrate from its wide-ranging contents.
10. The two main criteria offered by the Buddha himself before his final passing away, for testing the validity of his religious philosophy and the regulatory enactments of discipline, fall within the acknowledged categories of Sutta and Vinaya. In what way would you justify the addition, in the writings of Buddhaghosa, of an appendix to this?



## Question Paper (2)

IBU / Penang Campus 2000

Professor Dhammavihari

Buddhist Social Concepts

**Answer five questions only**

1. Basic social concepts of Buddhism originate from its fundamental anthropocentric standpoint of shifting the emphasis from a theory of creation to one of natural evolution.
2. Buddhism being essentially a philosophical way of religious living [i.e. a combination of religion and philosophy], reckons good life on earth here lived by humans as the very foundation of human salvation.

3. The Buddhist concept of social growth, particularly of political structuring, cannot be divorced from religious values. Discuss, with special reference to the idea of the Universal Monarch or *Rājā Cakkavatti*.
4. Economic development of a state along channels of agriculture, industry and trade, Buddhism insists, should keep at heart the welfare and well-being of man and bird and beast in the land. Exemplify the role of the State with regard to this and show how Buddhism brings this about within a framework of Buddhist values.
5. How does the religio-philosophical concept that the world of man exists within his 'fathom-sized body' together with the possibility of its emancipation, reinforce a dynamic sense of individual and social responsibility and accountability within a Buddhist society.
6. The family, with its diverse relationships, provides the basic building material for guaranteed vigorous social construction. Make a complete study of the Sigāla Sutta [Singālovāda] in the light of this observation.
7. In the Buddhist sense, how far would you agree with the definition of the word *rājā* [= king] as 'he who brings delight to the people'?
8. Buddhism looks upon 'child rearing' as being even more important than 'child bearing'. Discuss, with special reference to the system of 'four-fold child care' [*cattāri saṅgaha-vatthūn*] enunciated in Buddhism.
9. Write a comprehensive note on Buddhism's attempt at tracing the origin of crime in society and the remedial measures it recommends to the State to eradicate them .
10. Either - Explain how in Buddhism the religion and religious men are brought into the corpus of statecraft.

Or - Discuss in full 'the seven conditions that arrest social decay' [*satta*



*aparihāniyā dhammā*] of the Vajjis referred to by the Buddha and point out their modern relevance to satecraft in the world today.



## Question Paper (3)

IBU - Penang Campus 2000  
Professor Dhammavihari

### Buddhist Art

**Answer five questions only**

1. Give a brief introduction to the origin and development of the threefold *cetiya*s in Buddhism.
2. Historical literary traditions relating to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha have been a more than adequate source of inspiration to works of Buddhist art. Discuss in relation to any two of the following.
  - a. Bodhisatta's resolution at the feet of Buddha Dipankara - Afghanistan.
  - b. Portrayal of the Bodisatta during his austerities - Pakistan.
  - c. Buddha's descent to Sankassa from the heavenly worlds.
3. Buddhist art in any part of the Buddhist world is a glorification of the story of the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. Discuss, selecting your material from any country with which you are familiar.
4. History of Buddhist religious art in any country is more eloquent and

- convincing than volumes of literature on the subject. Discuss in relation to any one of these countries: India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar.
5. Early Buddhist art traditions of India are closely backed by their literary religious traditions. Write comprehensive explanatory notes on the two following themes:
    - a. The four *saṃvejanīyaṭṭhāna* or places associated with the Buddha which evoke religious emotion.
    - b. Paying homage to the Buddha in his *parinirvāṇa*.
  6. Write comprehensive notes on any two of the Buddha images, indicating their historical, religious and legendary significance.
    - i. Colossal standing Buddha in Bamian - Afghanistan
    - ii. Buddha in *dharmacakra - mudrā* - Saranath
    - iii. Buddha in *bhūmisparsa - mudrā*
    - iv. Walking Buddha of Thailand
    - v. Daibutsu of Kamakura - Japan
  7. While Hellenistic [Greek] Buddhist sculptors endeavour to portray the Buddha as a human with super-human physical development, Indians capture within a statue of the Buddha the maximum spiritual development of man .
  8. Diversity in the forms of Buddhist art in their places of worship bring the glory of the divine and the transcendental within the reach of the common worldlings. Discuss with reference to any aspects of Buddhist temple art, including painting, sculpture and architecture, of a country of your choice.



## New Research Data from Pali Texts

A . New Probes into the concept of NAMARUPA.

1. Nāmarūpa as a dependent and interdependent component tied up with Viññāṇa. This is its basic and primary position in the theory Causal Genesis or Paṭiccasamuppāda. See Dīgha II. 63.

- a. **Viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpan** 'ti iti kho pan ' etaṃ vuttaṃ tad Ananda iminā ' pi etaṃ pariyāyena veditabbaṃ yathā viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ. Viññāṇaṃ va hi Ananda mātukucchiṃ na okkamissatha api nu kho nāmarūpaṃ mātukucchimiṃ samucchissathā ' ti.

\* Therafter it specifically adds that if the newly arriving **Viññāṇa** does not abide in the mother's womb, i.e. does not provide company to the **Nāmarūpa**, there shall be no growth of a new life in the mother's womb - *Viññāṇaṃ va hi Ananda mātukucchiṃ okkamitvā vakkamissatha api nu kho **nāmarūpaṃ itthatthāya abhinibbattissathā** 'ti. No h 'etaṃ bhante.*

Tasmāt ' iha Ananda es 'eva hetu etaṃ nidānam esa samudayo **esa paccayo nāma-rūpassa yad ' idaṃ viññāṇaṃ** .

\*\* In the absence of a **life-supporting Viññāṇa** [which we confidently say is **no part of parental contribution here** for the commencement of a new life-process and therefore arriving from outside - *gandabba* or *gantabba* - as a **journeying-across** contributory factor for rebirth, **Nāmarūpa** shall no longer serve as a foundation for samsaric continuance to generate its consequent ills of birth, decay, death and all other associated miseries. Like wise **Viññāṇa** as Samsāric life carrier [*Viññāṇa-sota* or *Samvattanika-viññāṇa*] needs a **Nāmarūpa** as its

physical basis. Note what our same sutta Mahānidāna pronounces on this.

- b. Nāma-rūpapaccayā viññāṇan ti iti kho pan ' etaṃ vuttam tadā' nanda iminā p ' etaṃ pariyāyena veditabbam yathā nāma-rūpapaccayā viññāṇaṃ. Viññāṇaṃ va hi Ananda nāma-rūpe patiṭṭhaṃ nālabhissatha api nu kho āyati jāti-jarā-maraṇa-dukkha-samudaya-sambhavo paññāyethā ' ti. No h ' etaṃ bhante. Tasmāt ' ihā ' nanda es 'eva hetu etaṃ nidānam esa samudayo esa paccayo viññānassa yadidaṃ nāma-rūpaṃ. .. Ettāvatā vaṭṭaṃ vaṭṭati itthattam paññāpanāya yadidaṃ nāma-rupaṃ saha viññāṇena.

\*\*\* We have seen that in the **Causal Genesis** or the **Paṭiccasamuppāda** of twelve links, **this mutual inter-relatedness** of **Viññāṇa** and **Nāmarūpa** is unmistakably emphasised and pointed out. All other items are sequentially related.

